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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/779,467	02/12/2004	Jochen Hofmann	51900/DBP/M521	5554
23363 7590 11/29/2007 CHRISTIE, PARKER & HALE, LLP PO BOX 7068 PASADENA, CA 91109-7068			EXAMINER EDELL, JOSEPH F	
			ART UNIT 3636	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 11/29/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/779,467

Applicant(s)

HOFMANN ET AL.

Examiner

Joseph F. Edell

Art Unit

3636

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 November 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 4,6,8,9,13 and 28 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5,7,10-12,14-27 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 February 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office Action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn.

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, toothed zones mesh with each other (claim 15) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner,

the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-3, 5, 7, 10-12, 14-24, 26, and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,412,357 Billen in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,979,773 to Eubank.

Billen discloses a seat assembly that is basically the same as that recited in claims 1-3, 5, 7, 10-12, 14-24, 26, and 27 except that the seat assembly lacks a displacement arrangement, as recited in the claims. See Figure 4 of Billen for the teaching that a seat assembly has a seat element 210,212 comprising a component of a seat structure, an at least partially hollow cylindrical drive element 220,236 connected via section 230 to the seat element, and a weight sensor 218,222,230 (see column 6, lines 20-27) capable of detecting at least one of seat occupancy and the weight of a seat user wherein the drive element is pivotably mounted on the seat element via a mounting section of the weight sensor, the mounting section extends axially inside at least one of the drive element and an element nonpivotably connected thereto, the drive element is pivotably mounted on the weight sensor through a mounting element 230

arranged on the drive element, the mounting element capable of being preassembled on the weight sensor using an axial locking element before the mounting element is nonpivotably connected to the drive element, the mounting section serves for radial mounting of the drive element, a locking element 234 for axial retention of the drive element arranged on the mounting section, the mounting section serves for radial and axial mounting of the drive element, the weight sensor being electrically operated and detects bending stresses, the weight sensor is arranged nonpivotably on the seat element via a lock nut 24 (see Fig. 1), the weight sensor being designed in two parts nonpivotably connected to each other, a sensor part is nonpivotably fixed to the seat element, the drive element and the weight sensor constitute a preassembled assembly capable of attaching to the seat element, and the seat element is made up of a mounting angle attached to part of the seat structure.

With respect to claim 15, Examiner is interpreting the mesh threaded areas of the drive tube 2 and sensor 3 as reading on the claim limitation "toothed zones." Billen teaches toothed zones of the nut and shaft (see Fig. 4) that mesh with each other and are capable of mounting the drive element on the mounting section.

Eubank shows a seat assembly similar to that of Billen wherein the seat assembly has a seat element 48 (see Fig. 2) that is a component of a seat structure of a motor vehicle seat, a cylindrical element 58 pivotably connected to the seat element and being a component of a displacement arrangement for an adjustable part of the seat. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the seat assembly of Billen such that the at least

partially hollow cylindrical drive element is capable of pivot connection to the seat element and the drive element comprises a component of a displacement arrangement for an adjustable part of the motor vehicle seat, such as the seat assembly disclosed by Eubank. One would have been motivated to make such a modification in view of the suggestion in Eubank that the element connected to the seat element and being a component of the displacement arrangement of seat allows for the seat to fold to a stowed position.

With respect to claim 7 wherein Billen, as modified, does not specifically recite the material connection of the tubular drive element and the mounting element, modifying the material connection would have been obvious at the time of Applicant's invention because the use of preferred materials discovered by routine experimentation is ordinarily within the skill of the art. Further, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the material connection of the tubular drive element and the mounting element since the Applicant has not disclosed that having the specific material connection solves any stated problem or is for any particular purpose and it appears that the connection of the tubular drive and the mounting element would perform equally well with any known material used in the art.

4. Claims 25 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Billen in view of Eubanks as applied to claims 1-3, 5, 7, 10-12, 14-24, 26, and 27 above, and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2003/0067196 A1 to Sakamoto et al.

Billen, as modified, discloses a seat that is basically that same as that recited in claims 25 and 29 except that the tubular drive element lacks a transverse tube, as

recited in the claims. Sakamoto et al. show a seat similar to that of Billen wherein the tubular drive element 20b (Fig. 1) has a transverse tube 28 (Fig. 4) running from one longitudinal side of the seat to the other, and a locking nut 27a (Fig. 4). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the seat of Billen such that the drive element has a transverse tube running from one longitudinal side of the seat to the other, such as the seat disclosed in Sakamoto et al. One would have been motivated to make such a modification in view of the suggestion in Sakamoto et al. that the transverse tube connects seat element spaced under the seat to maintain a predetermined width, and the lock nut and thread are used for securing connection of disparate pieces.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to the rejection of claims as being anticipated by Billen have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph F. Edell whose telephone number is (571) 272-6858. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-5:00pm.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.


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Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Joe Edell
November 26, 2007


JOE EDELL
PRIMARY EXAMINER